

Secrets to Surviving Life's Storms, Part 4 - Acts 27:15-20 – August 8th, 2010

- This is part four of a series I've titled; "Secrets to Surviving Life's Storms." Paul is in the midst of a perilous storm on this ship to Rome.
- We know from the text, "that" Paul survived this storm, but, I believe the Holy Spirit wants us to know "how" Paul survived this storm.
- In other words, what was Paul's secret in life - to surviving the storms of life? How was he able to get through all that he went through?
- So far, we found six of these secrets, or reasons, if you prefer, for Paul's survival, and we'll now pick it up in verse 15 with our 7th one.

7. Wisdom (Verses 15-17)

15 The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. 16 As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure. 17 When the men had hoisted it aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along.

- v15 Luke tells us how they were caught by the storm and unable to head into the wind so they had to just let the storm drive them along.
- v16 He goes on to describe how they were barely able to secure the lifeboat to the ship so that they wouldn't lose it in the storm.
- v17 They try and hold the ship together with ropes because they fear it will break apart if they run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis.
- One has suggested that the sandbars of Syrtis was the "graveyard of ships," and was feared as much as we fear the Bermuda Triangle.

- This was the wisest things they could've done. First, they bring the lifeboat, which was towed behind the ship, and secure it to the ship.
- Then, they take the ropes and wrap them around the ship to hold it together, lower the anchor, and all while at the mercy of the storm.
- They use their God given common sense and practical wisdom to do what they could to "hold it together," so it wouldn't break apart.
- When in a storm, God has given us the common sense and the wisdom from above to take practical measures to "hold it together."
- The book of the Proverbs is replete with the practical as it relates to "wisdom," and how it both works out, and plays out in our lives.

Proverbs 28:26 He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe. NIV

Proverbs 4:11-13 11 I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. 12 When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble. 13 Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life. NIV

James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. NIV

8. Simplicity (Verses 18-19)

18 We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. 19 On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.

- v18 We're told that the beating and the battering from the storm was so devastating, that they had to throw their cargo overboard.
- v19 After three days of this, they had to lighten their load even more and throw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.
- This would seem to suggest the obvious; if they hadn't lightened their load throwing everything overboard, they would have been sunk.
- By now, you probably know where I'm going with this one. If we're going to survive the storms of life, we have got to simplify our lives.
- In other words, our lives in this world have become weighted and complicated by the things of this world, and they're taking us down.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 "God made us plain and simple, but we have made ourselves very complicated". TEV

Some of God's best truths, like priceless treasures, are hidden in depths most folks never take the time to search out. We have made ourselves very complicated. Those who determine to simplify their lives quickly discover it is a rigorous solo voyage against the wind. Noise and words are frenzied, hectic schedules dull our senses, closing our ears to His still, small voice and making us numb to His touch. Noise and crowds have a way of siphoning our energy and distracting our attention, making prayer (worship) an added chore rather than a comforting relief. If the pace and push, the noise and the crowds are getting to you, it's time to stop the nonsense and find a place of solace to refresh your spirit. How busy we have become and as a result, how empty we have become. Simplicity, silence, solitude, and surrender (will make) the pause and the hush sing a double song... "Be still, and know"!

Chuck Swindol "Intimacy with the Almighty"

9. Scripture (Verse 20)

20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

- v20 They finally give up all hope of being saved because for days they couldn't see the sun or stars as the storm continued to rage.
- It's important to understand that without the sun during the day, or the stars at night, their navigational abilities had been eliminated.
- Absent the stars and sun to light the way and give them insight as to their direction, they had no way of knowing where they were going.
- So too, without specific scripture to light the way giving us insight as to our direction, we have no way of knowing where we're going.

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. NIV

Psalms 19:1-3 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. 3 There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. NIV